

## Rockland Riverfront Communities Council 2020 Year-in-Review

The Rockland Riverfront Communities Council (RRCC), officially established on January 16, 2002, is an inter-municipal organization comprised of the Towns of Clarkstown, Haverstraw, Orangetown, and Stony Point; the Villages of Grand View-on-Hudson, Haverstraw, Nyack, Piermont, South Nyack, Upper Nyack, and West Haverstraw; the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the County of Rockland. The Council's mission is to protect, enhance, and utilize the unique assets of the Hudson River and nearby parks through inter-municipal cooperation between riverfront communities and other appropriate agencies in Rockland County. In furtherance of this mission, the Council encourages and promotes the preservation of natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources; environmental education; sustainable economic development and public access to the river, where possible.

The Council is an outgrowth of a \$150,000 Quality Communities grant from the NYS Department of State. Rockland County, Westchester County, and Pace University Land Use Law Center received the grant to encourage inter-municipal partnerships between riverfront communities.

The RRCC continues to work closely with the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The Council reviewed the updated Greenway Trail map and discussed where other trail locations could be designated in the future. Each municipal representative was asked to determine whether Greenway Trail signage was present along their designated trail sections, the condition of the existing signage, and whether additional signage was warranted.

Members were also notified of potential grant opportunities that related to the goals and objectives of the RRCC. Municipalities that apply for grants, will often reach out to the Rockland Riverfront Communities Council for letters of support. Due to COVID there were no letters of support written.

The municipal project list was updated for 2020. This listing contains projects that have been completed as well as projects that are underway or proposed. The projects are reflective of the goals and objectives of the Rockland Riverfront Communities Council and provide the Council with a listing for grant application purposes.

Many land use issues were discussed at the RRCC meetings, including: the Nyack College Campus; accessory dwelling units; Nickel-O-Farms; Trees for Tribes; the Hudson River Bridge in Nyack; the Upper Nyack Comprehensive Plan; the tourism grant received by the Village of Nyack; Repair Café; Rockland Conservation & Service Corps opportunities; the creation of a County Agricultural District; an update on the Village of Haverstraw Chair Factory site; the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge shared use path; the potential dissolution of the Village of South Nyack; and the impacts of COVID on operations and projects.

Focus meetings were started in 2015 to improve the council member discussions. Each monthly meeting has a specific topic for discussion, guest presenters, or round table discussions that relate to land use, development, or municipal issues. Bill Pfaff, chairman of the Village of Upper Nyack Planning Board, led the focus meeting in 2020 on the Village's efforts to update their Comprehensive Plan. Bill noted that the last Comprehensive Plan for the Village was adopted in February 1999. The Village had first discussed updating their Plan in December 2015, and then again in February 2017. As chairman of the Planning Board, Bill and the Village Engineer began the process to update the Plan as consultants. They projected the updates would take 15 months to complete. The initial committee was comprised of a member from each of the Village's land use boards. Twelve broad topics were laid out for the plan, including: Infrastructure, Land Use/Development, Parks/Open Space/Recreation, Streams/Water Courses, Commercial Districts, Climate Planning, Housing and Aging in Place, and Transportation/Traffic. The draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update was adopted by the Village's Board of Trustees on February 6, 2020 and issued to the county for the GML review. The Village had planned to hold public meetings in March, but they were postponed due to COVID-19. Future public meetings were scheduled to take place over video conference.

Various flyers and documents were distributed to members of the RRCC and to municipalities and/or made available to the public when deemed appropriate. These flyers addressed and included the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribs, the Lamont-Doherty newsletter, grant information, and an assortment of flyers announcing related organizations dinners and public events. In addition, information about the Rockland County Conservation & Service Corps program was presented, and assistance was requested in both finding sites with projects where students can be hosted, and in recruiting students to work on the various projects.

The Rockland Riverfront Communities Council will continue to network with like-minded organizations, such as Keep Rockland Beautiful, the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, the Rockland County Health Department, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program and will continue its close relationship with the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council. The RRCC will continue working to connect sections of the Greenway Trail and designate existing routes along the riverfront. The RRCC will continue to provide support for Palisades Interstate Park Commission improvements and plans in Rockland. The RRCC will continue to develop model ordinances, when needed, and will encourage Rockland's municipalities to adopt all or parts of the Ridgeline Model Ordinance. Ongoing support and assistance with getting the Greenway Compact Plan adopted by the Rockland municipalities will be provided. As always, the RRCC will continue to work diligently to develop strong foundations to further cooperation among Rockland's riverfront communities and organizations.